

# School Bus Safety: Protecting Our Children Every Ride

School is back in session, and millions of children across the country board a school bus every morning, ready to start their day of learning. ***National School Bus Safety Week, October 20-24, 2025***, reminds the public of the importance of school bus safety.

Each year, hundreds of children are injured while entering or exiting school buses due to driver inattention or traffic violations. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 113 occupants died from school transportation vehicles from 2014-2023.

## Understanding the Flashing Lights

Illegal School Bus Passing puts children at risk every day. In Pennsylvania, understanding what the flashing lights mean is also an important part of keeping children safe. Yellow flashing lights mean the bus is about to stop to pick up or drop off children. When you see yellow lights, you should slow down and prepare to stop.

There are specific laws for what red flashing lights and an outstretched “Stop” sign mean. **According to PennDOT:**

- You must stop at least 10 feet away from a school bus when its red lights are flashing and the stop sign arm is out.
- Stay stopped until the red lights turn off, the stop sign goes in, and all kids are safely out of the road.
- These rules also apply when you are driving behind a school bus or driving up to an intersection where it is stopped.
- The only time you don't have to stop is when there is a barrier in the middle of the road that separates your car from the bus.

## Safety Tips for students and parents

By teaching children safe habits, modeling good behavior, and staying aware on the road, we can ensure every school bus journey is a safe journey.

### For Students:

- Always stay at least six feet from the curb while waiting for the bus.
- Wait for the driver's signal before crossing the street.
- Board and exit carefully using handrails.
- Stay seated at all times and keep the aisle clear.
- Ride calmly and quietly, do not distract the driver.

### For Parents:

- Teach children bus stop routines and reinforce them daily.
- Walk younger kids to the bus stop until they're confident.
- Encourage open communication about anything unusual on the ride.

Keeping children safe on the school bus takes all of us. The bright yellow bus should be a symbol of trust and protection. With everyone working together, it can stay that way. Let's commit to making every school day begin and end with a safe journey.